

Non-Traditional College Students in Today's Colleges

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Non-traditional students

Most college students enter college right after finishing their high school career or a year after. This is what we call a traditional student someone who enters college between the ages of 17-19, but what about those older students you see in your classrooms? Have you ever spoken to them? Students that enter college two or more years after finishing high school are classified as non-traditional students. These students for one reason or another decided not to enter college right away, but why? Threw out this paper I will use research, interviews, and personal experience to deliver you a rounded understanding as to why non-traditional students entered college later, returned to college or is taking them much longer to complete than most. I will also discuss the findings of others as well as my self regarding the overall grades of these students and weather there is a difference on average grades between traditional and non-traditional students

Background

Threw out the past 20 years the number of non-traditional students has been increasing significantly, so naturally it sparked the interest of many scholars as a basses for different types of research. The two biggest questions are “why?” and “how well do you do?” well the “how do you do” question is more easily answered with numbers. On average traditional students do %11 better on standardized testing and over all marks. (Charlotte Minnick, 2013) The “why” question is not as simply answered and is far more interesting. The reasons in which non-traditional students are born are quite vast, ranging anywhere from “I just wasn’t ready yet” to “I have a family to support” or “I served in the military before entering college”

Method

The methods in which this information was collected was there indirectly many ways. Directly however in two main ones. I studied the research of other scholars and was able to learn things from their findings and years of research that I could not have collected of my own accord. I did however conduct multiple interviews, (five to be exact) with our own Bloomsburg university non-traditional students. Three of them were students that I have met before in my classes and two were approached randomly. I used common questions that I was interested in. for example. "Why did you chose to start college so late, or why did you return?" as well as "what did you do before coming to college?"

Findings

As studies shown conducted by Charlotte Minnick showed that on average non-traditional students on average score %11 lower on average as well as on standardized testing. (Charlotte Minnick, 2013) This can be for multiple reasons such as the amount of time in-between when the student last had to study on a regular basis and how much of the good study habits and patters were lost over time. Another reason could be in pact from outside school life can be much more interfering on certain non-traditional students more than your traditional ones, for reasons such as having to take care of their family. For three of the individuals that it interviewed this was the case. One of them was married with two kids, one was a single mother and the last one was married. All three of them worked while in school the one part time and the other two full time. Meaning a full forty hours a week in addition to the hours of studying that it takes to make it through college as well as anything that comes up in everyday life in their household.

Studies from the interview showed a wide variety of reasoning for students taking the status of non-traditional. One of the individuals knew that she “just wasn’t ready” after high school and began working a factory job. She eventually got pregnant and had her first child. She knew that she “wants more for her child” and realized it was time to go back to school. Another had a family and decided that he would work while his wife went to school and is now going back for his turn. The last three that I interviewed were veterans of the US Military in one branch or another. Two of them were still younger ages 24 and 26 that joined among other reasons to receive the GI Bill and have the college paid for. One said “it is much nicer to not have student loans” the other is still in the Army reserves and plans on receiving a commission and returning to active duty among completion of his degree. The third man is age 36 he served for 16 years until he was discharged honorably after being wounded overseas. He had never thought about going back to college all he ever wanted to do was serve but he needed “something to keep me busy, I didn’t know what to do with all the time I had” so he chose to return to school as well.

Another interesting topic that I came up upon and never took into realization myself is the non-traditional students that earn that status the means of online education. More than half of the “freshmen” in the United States each year consist of students beginning online courses. (Claire Wladis, 2015) Whether it is at a solely online academy or a physical college but they utilize online classes to manage their time schedules and lives well. There are on average 16.8 million new online students per year since 2008. (Claire Wladis, 2015)

Conclusion

Studies clearly show that there are a very large number of non-traditional students in the US and it doesn’t seem likely to suspect that the numbers of non-traditional students will decrease anytime soon. More on the contrary will likely increase there are people that think a

revamping of sorts is needed in today's educational system. (Dustin Bessette, 2014) There should be more room for accommodation of non-traditional students as well as offer a more career based type of learning system to be more specified in the fields while still receiving a full college education. Dustin Bessette. It is also eye opening to realize that students that you normally would not talk to because they aren't necessarily in your age group could have some of the most interesting stories that you've ever heard.

References

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Environments VOLUME 4 NO. 4 (2014) Journal of APPLIED LEARNING TECHNOLOGY